

"A year ago, the White House said the president was going to advocate for a comprehensive and responsible approach to the use and stewardship of our oceans. Today, what have we seen from the president? Old ideas, some promises of money, but nothing that lives up to the recommendations of the president's own U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy," said Farr. "What more does the White House need to accept that our oceans are not 'bottomless pits'? How much scientific data? How many species have already gone extinct? How many degraded habitats? How many sick consumers will it take?"

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a collaborative effort of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission led by former commission chairs, Admiral James D. Watkins and the Honorable Leon E. Panetta, gave the nation a D+ grade on ocean policy reform. They rated international leadership on oceans an F, research, science and education efforts a D and new funding for ocean policy and programs an F.

"California and other regional governments are making far greater advances in improving and preserving the health of our ocean and coastal ecosystems than the Administration can seem to manage at the federal level. With the information and technology available, there is no excuse why the Administration hasn't made the oceans more of a priority. We don't need figureheads or more studies, we need action and we need it yesterday! I have legislation ready to go, already introduced in Congress, that would move national policy into step with the kind of advancements California is already making," added Farr

"I hope this report from the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative will be the wakeup call the Administration needs to reach out and start working with ocean advocates like myself in Congress to push serious legislative reforms this year. I encourage everyone to speak out, and demand that the president and the Congressional Leadership prioritize oceans."

For more information on the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative's U.S. Ocean Policy Report Card, visit www.jointoceancommission.org.